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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 000783

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS, EAP/RSP, DRL; NSC FOR
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SUBJECT: ACEH ELECTION RESULTS REINFORCE THE PEACE PROCESS

REF: JAKARTA 657 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph L. Novak, reasons 1.4(b+d).

[1](#)1. (U) This message was coordinated with Consulate Medan.

[1](#)2. (C) SUMMARY: Aceh Province passed a major test for sustainable peace with the widespread acceptance of official election results for the April elections. Based on the results, the party of former separatists, Partai Aceh (PA), got nearly half the vote for the provincial legislature (DPR-Aceh). President Yudhoyono's Partai Demokrat (PD) dominated with over 40% of the Aceh vote for the national legislature (DPR-RI). While tensions still simmer in some parts of Aceh, the elections--which were largely free and fair--bode well for future stability. Observers have expressed appreciation to the USG for its election observation effort. END SUMMARY.

ACEH -- OFFICIAL ELECTION RESULTS ANNOUNCED

[1](#)3. (SBU) Aceh's election board on May 1 submitted the official results of the province's elections held on April 9. As expected, PA polled well for the DPR-Aceh, getting nearly 47% of the vote, followed by PD with 11%, Golkar at 7%, and three other national Islamic-based parties at under 3-4% each. Other local parties all got less than 2% of the vote, and in fact, only one other local party besides PA seated anyone in the DPR-RI. Under the terms of the 2005 Helsinki Peace Accord, Aceh is the only province in Indonesia with the right for local parties to compete for local office. (Note: The GOI is slated to announce overall national results for the April elections on May 9.)

[1](#)4. (SBU) For the national Legislature (DPR-RI), in which only national parties can compete, Yudhoyono's PD got 41% of the vote, with others lagging well behind. Vice President Yusuf Kalla's Golkar Party got 11%, followed by three Muslim-based parties: the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), 7%; the United Development Party and the National Mandate Party each at about 6%. Other parties all got 2-3%.

ELECTIONS ACHIEVE BALANCE FOR PEACE

[1](#)5. (SBU) In terms of peace and stability in Aceh, these results are close to ideal. Had PA gotten well over half the vote as it claimed it would, the central government would have been extremely nervous about PA--the party of former Free Aceh Movement (GAM) members. Such a victory might also have emboldened PA to run roughshod over other parties. Alternatively, a smaller victory would have created a very disgruntled PA and the possibility for instability. Inexperience and potential for corruption in the new PA-controlled DPR-RI will be a concern and needs to be

monitored by local NGOs, observers told DepPol/C.

¶6. (C) Governor Irwandi Yusuf of the PA announced that he was pleased with the results. "I hope that the new DPRA members will be good partners for the executive in implementing people-based development programs," he said. Many Acehnese who are not necessarily sympathizers of the former GAM voted for PA with the hope that a PA government could deliver on promises to improve the situation in the province, according to Aguswandi (one name only) of the Aceh Peace Resource Center, who is also chair of the only other local party which won a seat, Partai Rakyat Aceh (PRA). Other more traditional PA supporters voted for PA simply because it was an Acehnese party, he added.

¶7. (SBU) PA won big in its traditional strongholds along the north and west coasts of Aceh, garnering up to 85% of the vote in some districts. PA and Yudhoyono's PD formed a partnership in the election which helped both parties. PD and PA shared several influential campaign operatives, including former GAM spokesperson Sofyan Daud, who asked voters to vote for PA for the DPR-Aceh and for PD for the DPR-RI.

PRESIDENT'S PARTY DOES WELL

¶8. (C) PD's 11% of the vote for DPR-Aceh was impressive for a national party. Acehnese largely distrust national parties after years of perceived neglect by Jakarta interests. The vote was clearly a vote of confidence in Yudhoyono both for his role in the 2005 peace accord and because Acehnese believe he continues to have their best interests at heart.

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PD split the vote with PA in Aceh Besar and in two southeast districts, and won in the capital city of Banda Aceh and Sabang Island.

¶9. (SBU) PD also did well in the more impoverished highland districts, except in Bener Meriah, where Golkar won. The highland districts are largely anti-GAM and experienced some of the province's highest tensions during the election campaign period (see reftels). A dispute over vote counting manipulation in Bener Meriah is still being investigated by officials. The Aceh Election Supervisory Commission accused three local election commissions of marking up votes: Bener Meriah, Aceh Timur and Aceh Tenggara.

RESULTS WIDELY ACCEPTED

¶10. (SBU) Observers have told us that neither local nor national parties are complaining about the results, and the elections are seen as largely free and fair. Some parties are filing court cases about isolated cases of alleged election violations. The potential outbreak of violence during election time in post-conflict Aceh did not materialize with isolated exceptions in which police reacted quickly. At this point, Aceh remains very calm except in Bener Meriah where some tensions still simmer.

¶11. (SBU) Observers credit international observers for contributing to peaceful elections, the USG team and the small Carter Center team in particular. USG election observers traveled all over the province, beginning over a month before the election. Even though the Carter Center had only six observers in Aceh, they were highly effective by being mobile and focusing on the hotspots, Aguswandi told DepPol/C.

¶12. (C) Some elements of the military in Aceh are grumbling about the PA victory, suspicious that PA will pursue a separatist agenda. PA was clever in partnering with PD, since working with the national governing party will reduce suspicions that PA is seeking independence from Indonesia.

HUME